

MARKOPOULOS (T.) **The Future in Greek: from Ancient to Medieval.** Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. Pp. xiv + 291. £69. 9780199539857.

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The Future in Greek is an impressive model of how to write an analysis of a grammatical category in the history of a language. Based on Markopoulos' 2006 Cambridge PhD dissertation, it is essentially the story of three constructions (μέλλω + infinitive; ἔχω + infinitive; (ἐ)θέλω + infinitive). Although some of the analyses of individual developments and examples may be disagreed with, in its scope and intentions it can only be applauded, and it will be fruitful reading for hellenists and linguists alike.

A particularly laudable aspect of Markopoulos' approach is the breadth and depth of his textual analysis. He gives ample historical and cultural background at the beginning of each of the four periods he covers as well as specific information about individual texts. Further, he does not restrict himself to the standard version of texts, but rather consults different manuscripts and critical editions. Particularly novel and beneficial is his use and careful description of the official and non-literary texts that he uses for late medieval Greek, previously rarely consulted in linguistic studies.

The study begins with a well-written account of the theoretical and practical methodology used (chapter 1.1), including a particularly interesting account of current perspectives on the phenomenon of grammaticalization. Here Markopoulos also shows the benefits of using a socio-linguistic approach in a study of grammatical change (revealing, for example, the prevalence of the aorist infinitive after μέλλω in private letters in the Hellenistic-Roman period; the correlation between frequency in lower registers and development into middle registers of the ἔχω construction in the early medieval period; the causes of the downfall of the ἔχω construction).

The remainder of the book is divided into four chapters, one for each period covered. There is a clear weight on the latest stage of the language. There is certainly a lot to be said about this latter period. However, other sections could arguably have benefited from as much expansion. It is also in this final section that there is most description of the uses of the constructions falling without the domain of futurity and therefore arguably without the scope of the book (for example, εἶχα, ἦθελα).

The nature of the texts means of course that some periods have less data on which to base his claims; his discussion of ἔχω in the papyri of the Hellenistic-Roman period is particularly fragile, based on only five or six examples (81). There is a similar difficulty with his analysis of μέλλω in EMG where the claim that it has 'progressed a stage in the grammaticalization chain' (93) is based on very slim evidence. The book is rounded off with a (rather short) set of conclusions.

One general criticism is that the use of jargon, though relatively sparse, is not always helpful. For example, Markopoulos appears inconsistent in what he really wants TAM (tense-aspect-modality) to mean. And although he has an interesting discussion of the slippery notion of futurity (1.1.2) and periphrasis or 'auxiliary verb construction' (AVC) (1.1.3) and questions the existence of discrete categories in language he then states that the construction of μέλλω + infinitive is an AVC in Classical Greek (2.1). Given that he later admits there are no morphosyntactic symptoms to justify this description, it might have been useful to avoid labelling it.

Other criticisms may be levelled at his analysis of specific examples or developments. For example, although full of several interesting examples and statistics, I was overall not persuaded by the analysis of the μέλλω construction in Classical Greek. The examples given did not convince me it is a verb 'with inherent future-referring meaning' (31), and indeed elsewhere Markopoulos concludes that it 'should be seen as a modal verb with an "intention" meaning' (33). The difficulty of distinguishing between these meanings is par for the course (and well flagged up by Markopoulos in his introduction), but I did not always find it easy to pin down what conclusion he was drawing.

These kinds of criticisms are unremarkable given the extent covered: discussion of the μέλλω construction in Classical Greek alone could fill a good-sized monograph. This book should be applauded for its thoroughness, its clear and detailed use of interesting statistics and, above all, its diachronic approach and use of low-register texts.

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